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"And what rough beast its hour come round at last . . ."—*William Butler Yeats*

THE CHIMERA

Editors: William Arrowsmith, Fearon Brown, Frederick Morgan. *Art Editor:* Kneeland McNulty. *Associates:* Ormonde de Kay, John Horton, Bruce Odium. *Business Representative:* James Williams. *Advisers:* Elmer Adler, Carlos Baker, Maurice Edgar Coindreau, Philip Wheelwright.

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Cloud and Flame

By John Berryman



The summer cloud in summer blue ^A
Capricious from the wind will run, ^B
Laughing into the tender sun, ^B
Knowing the work that it must do. ^A
When One says liberty is vain ^C
The cloud will come to summer rain. ^C

After his college failure, Swift ^D
Eight hours a day against his age ^E
Began to document his rage ^E
Towards the years of strife and shift. ^D
From claims that pride or party made ^F
He kept in an exacting shade. ^F

Cornford in a retreat was lost; ^G
A stray shot like an aimless joke ^H
His learning, spirit, at one stroke ^H
Dispersed, his generation's cost. ^G
The gathered value of his head ^I
Is less than cloud, is less than bread. ^I

The One knows that the many burn, ^J
Prepared or unprepared: one flame ^K
Within a shade can strike its name, ^K
Another sees the cloud return. ^J
And Thirkill saw the Christ's head shake ^L
At Hastings, by the Bloody Lake. ^L

Satire: Anxiety

By Karl J. Shapiro



Alas, I would be overloved,
A sign, a Wonder unreprieved,
A bronze colossus standing high
As Rhodes or famous Liberty,
Bridging with my almighty thighs
A stainless steel metropolis
Where pigmy men in clothing creep
To Lilliputian work and sleep,
And Love with microscopic tears
Whispers to wee and perfect ears.
I would obscure the sun and throw
A shadow with my smallest toe
That down their teeming canyon files
Time could be told a hundred miles;
Lightning would flash within my hand,
An airman's beacon and sign of land,
My eyes eclipse the polar star,
Aldeberan and the flare of war;
Golden my head and cleanly hewn
Would sail above the lesser moon
And dart above the Pleiades
To peer at new astronomies
From where the earth, a bluish clod,
Seems smallest in the eye of God. 24

But when in lucid morning I
Survey my bulk and history,
Composite fool alive in air
With caecum and vestigial hair,
A thing of not-too-godly form

Conversant with the waiting worm,
Fixed in a span between two shades
For four or five or six decades,
Then all my pride and all my hope
As backward through a telescope
Diminish: I walk an endless street
Where topless towers for height compete,
And men of wiser blood and bone
Destroy me for the things they own—
Their taxes, vital tubes, and sons
Submissive in a world of guns.
I see my hands grow small and clear
Until they wink and disappear.

"ABSTRACTION"

Guy Maccoy, born in Texas in 1904, was one of the first artists to experiment with serigraphy (silk screen printing) as a fine-art medium. With the encouragement and help of his wife, Genoi Pettit, Mr. Maccoy early saw the possibilities of serigraphy in examples of commercial work with silk screens and developed his own technique so rapidly that his one-man exhibition of silk-screens, held in 1938 at the Contemporary Arts Gallery in New York, was the first of its kind. Since that time Mr. Maccoy has travelled widely over the United States, giving exhibitions, selling prints and spreading a knowledge of and appreciation for serigraphs. He is now at Bennington, Vermont.

The accompanying serigraph was drawn for *The Chimera* by Guy Maccoy on three silk screens prepared and printed by the editors and friends. It is the belief of the editors that this is the first serigraph to appear in a widely distributed magazine.



Crime and Punishment

A STUDY OF DOSTOEVSKY'S NOVEL

By R. P. Blackmur



CRIME AND PUNISHMENT has upon most readers an impact as immediate and obvious and full as the news of murder next door; one *almost* participates in the crime, and the trivial details become obsessively important. It has besides a secondary impact, by which, as one feels it, one discovers that one has been permanently involved in the nature of the crime: one has somehow contributed to the clarification of the true residual nature of crime in general through having contributed to the enactment of this crime in particular. It is the feeling of this impact that leads us to say our powers of attention have been exhausted. But there is a third and gradual impact, which comes not only at the end but almost from the beginning to the end, creating in us new and inexhaustible powers of attention. This is the impact of what Dostoevsky meant by punishment. The three impacts are united by the art of the novelist, and they are felt simultaneously. It is only that we are not aware at the time of the triple significance, and must, when it does transpire, rebuild it analytically. Thus we may come to estimate what it is that we know—what it is that has been clarified in the history of Raskolnikov which we had known all along in ourselves without being aware of it: we estimate our own guilt.

A crime is above all an act against the institutions of human law, custom, or religion; and there is a sense in which any act may be understood as criminal, for if the institution cannot be

found against which it is committed, then it may be called an anarchic act—against some institution that has not yet come to exist, but which will exist because of the crime. This notion comes from putting Rousseau's dusty vision in reverse. If, as Rousseau thought for one inspired moment, the evils of living come mostly from human institutions, it is as likely true, though not as inspired, that our institutions arise out of the evil that we do. It is LaForge who has said it best, and without any but poetic logic to blister his cry:

Allez, sterile ritournelles!
La Vie est vraie et criminelle!

This cry of LaForge represents the lyric sense that must inhabit every criminal who truly imagines his crime, if only for a flash, *before* he commits it to act. What the criminal imagines afterwards is another thing and we shall come to it. Here it is the crime only that has been imagined, and the promise of liberation in the cry within.

So it is with Raskolnikov. If we feel his case in terms of the LaForge lines we can understand both the motivation of his crime and the external logic of most of his conduct afterwards. It is the story of *Crime and Punishment* at the level of its immediate impact. We are very near it; it is the murder that only by some saving accident we did not ourselves commit—as we did not make a million, win a race, or conquer Europe, all the things it is still not impossible to do, and which, because we have not done them, may yet tempt us to murder. Between temptation and deed there is no distance at all in symbolic meaning. With that symbolic strength in mind, the story of Raskolnikov becomes not only possible but probable, and, as we attend it, not only probable but proved. Let us look and see.

How easy it is to believe that this young, handsome, proud, and sensitive boy might be drawn *first of all* to the possibility of murder as the way out of an intolerable situation. It is the situation of poverty, debt, starvation, shabbiness, sickness, loneliness; for Raskolnikov has reached such a stage of privation that even

thought has become a luxury—a kind of luxurious hallucinated hysteria; an extremity in which only the rashest dream seems a normal activity. It is the situation of the sponge, too, for Raskolnikov has come to depend on his mother and sister for help they cannot afford to give, for help they can give only by prostituting themselves in marriage and servile relationships. The sponge who is aware that he is a sponge is in an awkward situation; the pride of his awareness deprives him of the use of the exactions he makes; and that is how it is with Raskolnikov, as he lies in his attic committing symbolic murder. He deceives himself, proudly, that he has conceived murder to symbolize his mother's and sister's freedom as well as his own. He lends his dark motive the external colour of a good deed, and then identifies the colour with the motive, and forgets what the murder, dark within him, really is. But to starve and be a sponge, that is not all Raskolnikov has to put up with in his pride; he is in the situation, too, of the proud man of intellect who has as yet done nothing and who is afraid that there will be nothing for him to do unless he invents it. Not only can he do nothing for his poverty or for his family, he is in the terrible position of being unable to do anything for himself. Such is his pride, that none of the ordinary things men do will be enough; and such is his pride, too, that none of the things ordinary people—his mother, his sister, his forgotten friends—can do for him are tolerable to him; he is the man for whom no one can do anything. Deeper still, he is that part of all men which cannot be touched, but which must create an image of itself in some extraordinary deed, some act against ordinary people and against the ordinary part of himself. The extraordinary wells within him and inundates the ordinary self with its fever. And in that fever, which never leaves him while we know him, the possibility of murder becomes the necessity of murder.

What is fully imagined as necessary has goodness and freedom at the very heart of its horror, a sentiment which may be interpreted in different ways, having to do either with the tearing down of order or with the envelopment of disorder, or, finally, with the balancing of several disorders so as to form an order. At

the level of immediate impact, Raskolnikov's story is concerned with the tearing down of order; that is the melodrama which carries us along and exhausts our attention. What Dostoevsky does to that story, the immense clarification of secret life and intimate impulse which he brings to it, composes the secondary impact of the story, and brings us to the second stage where the disorder brought about in the first stage is enveloped by the created personality of Raskolnikov. Actually, the two processes go on at once, in the sense that no matter how far into the second stage Dostoevsky leads us, the first stage is never left behind, but is rather always present, a frame of action and image, to carry the significance of the second stage. This is to say that Dostoevsky never fails of the primary task of the novelist; if his story seems for the moment to have been left behind, it is only that in reality it has got ahead of us, and when we catch up we see how much has been done without our noticing it. The story of the Crime is blended with the clarification of the Punishment; the actor creates the role which expresses the nature and significance of his deed; Raskolnikov, in the end, becomes the product of his crime, but still depends on it to command our attention.

That is how Dostoevsky envelopes the disorder consequent upon Raskolnikov's attempt at the destruction of order. With the third possibility, whereby the imagination not only envelops disorder—our substantial chaos—in a created personality, but proceeds to balance the sense of several disorders—the tensions of chaos—against each other so as to form a new order; with this possibility Dostoevsky has little to do. It is not that he was necessarily unequal to the task, but that the nature, source, and direction of his insights did not lead him to undertake it. His view of necessity was simpler, and his sense of possibility more simplified, than the task would require; his vision was that of the primitive Christian, and that vision was so powerful within him that it blinded him to everything else. To him the edge of the abyss of sin was the horizon of salvation by faith, and suffering was the condition of vision. Sin was the Crime, and the suffering created by faith was the Punishment.

If we push the operation of this insight one step further, it becomes evident that the act of life itself is the Crime, and that to submit, by faith, to the suffering of life at the expense of the act is to achieve salvation—or, if you like a less theological phrase, it is to achieve integration or wholeness of personality. It is only dramatically true that the greater the sin the greater the salvation, and it is only arbitrarily true that any one act is sinful more than another act or than all acts. The crime of Raskolnikov, and its punishment in created suffering, could have been as great if he had never stirred from his room, if only the novelist's imagination could have conceived them. But the imagination requires images, as vision requires fables and thought requires formulas, before conceptions can be realised; which is to say that the faculties of men are not equal to their needs except by the intervention of symbols which they discover rather than create, and which they discover best of all in stories of violence, or of the sense of violence, or of the promise of violence.

So we watch, with the immediate attention which discovers meaning, the process of Raskolnikov trying to make a hero—a complete man—of himself by committing a foul and frivolous murder. Any animal might strike another down without need when the odour of blood is thick, and it means nothing. But we are shown how much this murder of an old and malevolent pawnbroker, ripe for death, as Raskolnikov says, ripe as a louse, is not meaningless but huge with meaning. The meaning begins with the stench of Petersburg, the stench of the detailed plans, the stench of pothouses, the pervading sense of the filthy possibilities of the human heart, and the glittering eyes of the victim peering through the slit of the door. The meaning grows more meaningful, irretrievably meaningful, when in the second chapter we are exposed to Marmeladov in the stinking tavern and hear his confession of drunken humiliation and of what it has brought upon Katerina his wife in the way of sickness and shame and anger and hairpulling, and brought upon his daughter too, in her glad submissive acceptance of the humiliation of prostitution. It is impossible to say how this adds to the richness of Raskolnikov's

motive, but like the general images of stench and violence and drunkenness, it is impossible not to *know*, and very precisely, how much it does add. Let us say that it exposes Raskolnikov, and through him the reader, to a kind of dead-level human degradation in terms of images which revolt him as he assents to them.

At any rate they fit him—for the purposes of the story—they fit him to see as further degradation the events which his mother's letter reports to him. Before he opens the letter we see his cluttered mind in his sleazy room trying to work around the idea of a "fortune all at once"; and in the letter he reads how indeed that is precisely what Douania his sister is about to get by selling herself to Luzhin. Douania has permitted herself or has been driven to do just the practical, ordinary thing which Raskolnikov, the extraordinary man, is unable to do, and which—as it is being done for *him*—is the more intolerably humiliating to him. Her marriage is like the prostitution of Sonia. Thinking of it, Hamlet-like, the idea of the murder rediscovers itself most naturally in his mind, and he finds that he had *felt beforehand* that it would come back; it has begun to acquire a kind of reality quite independent of him except that it requires to be completed.

Your ordinary novelist might well have now proceeded to the completion of the deed, but Dostoevsky saw deeper into the nature of the deed and knew that it required further preparation, so that it might be as ripe as the victim. Raskolnikov goes out for a breath of air and to escape the pressure of his dilemma. But there is no escape, except from one level of intensity to a deeper level. Walking on the boulevard the double pressure of Sonia and of Douania springs upon him in the shape of the drunken young girl, with the torn dress, and indecorous posture, evidently just seduced and then discarded, who is being pursued by the plump gentleman. In his shabby and dishevelled pride, and with his uprooted and irresolute mind he first *attempts* to save the girl and then gives it up as a bad job; he revolts against his revulsion, reminding himself of the percentage theory of vice whereby "a certain number" are bound to go that way, and resolves forth-

with to go see Razumihin, that simpleton of a man who takes things as they are. But again he changes his mind; he cannot see Razumihin till after "It." The image of the debauched girl has set the murder to pursuing him still more closely. He contrives for himself, as he thinks, an escape in the green islands of the Neva, where there is no stench, no drunkenness, no human filth. The human filth is stronger. He first buys himself a glass of vodka, and then walks out exhausted, turning aside on the way home and falls asleep in the bushes, where a dream assaults him with a fresh image of the little sorrel horse beaten to death because it cannot pull all humanity. In the dream he rushes to kiss the bleeding face of the horse as it dies, and at that moment wakes. The moment of waking is the nearest he comes to renouncing his crime before committing it, and it is the nearest, too, that he comes to realising its nature before the event. "It was as though an abscess that had been forming for a month past in his heart had suddenly broken. Freedom, freedom! He was free from that spell, that sorcery, that obsession!" He had reached the point which Shakespeare, in his own play of Crime and Punishment, *Measure for Measure*, calls the point where the two prayers cross, where, in the human heart, good and evil are created in the one gesture.

It was coincidence, you will remember, that decided the event. Raskolnikov happened to hear, on his way home, that the old pawnbroker would be left alone at seven the following evening, and he heard it at precisely the moment that he had given up the idea of the murder, when he had, in fact, begun again to use his reason and will. But the other thing had grown in him like a disease, and feeding on the coincidence, was able to destroy his will and reason, that is to say his sense of propriety in the social order. It may be observed, for those who carp at the use of coincidence as belittling the probabilities, that on the contrary the use of coincidence in art, like the sense of it in life, heightens the sense of inevitability; for coincidence is the artist's way of representing those forces in us not ourselves. Coincidence, properly dealt with, creates our sense of that other self within us whom we neither can ever quite escape nor quite meet up with.

In this case it is the perfected chain of coincidence, upon which Dostoevsky lavishes so many pages, that builds up the murder so that it is a kind of separate being existing between Raskolnikov and his victim. As he climbs the stairs, he feels that Alyona Ivanovna ought to be ready for him, ready to be murdered, for he feels that the murder is somewhere between them, other than either, but equally accessible to both. It was in the nature of Dostoevsky's insight to see always that the actor and the patient are both implicated in the deed, and that they are joined by it. The actor, in this case, has more consciousness than the patient of the implication; in *The Idiot* it is the other way round, and Myshkin, the patient, is shown as more conscious, or more representative, of the deeds that are done to him than the doers of the deeds can possibly be. In *Crime and Punishment*, it is Sonia who is perhaps the counterpart of Myshkin, for to her all deeds happen whether the doers realise it or not, and they happen, moreover, completely. It is perhaps because Raskolnikov is the other sort, the sort who requires of a deed that before it is credible or fully significant he must do it himself. He does not believe in the murder until he has done it, and not altogether even then. Constantly it slips away, a thing he realizes that he has forgotten, or a thing he has to re-enact, to emphasize, and so a thing that tends to lose its meaning except as he identifies himself with it; whereas to Sonia, once she has learned of it, once she has submitted herself to the idea of it in him, she has no doubts about it and it is entirely meaningful. Nothing herself, Sonia is able to contain everything; while Raskolnikov, who must be everything himself, can contain nothing for long. Dante would have known how to punish him, looking for a mirror through an eternal hell; but Dostoevsky has rather to transform him in order to save him, or more accurately to show him as about to be saved in Sonia's eyes.

But he is not transformed for a long time, never permanently in the book; never can he leave the murder which fixed him, nor the images of which it was made: the images of stench, poverty, drunkenness, vanity, sick-hunger, lechery and intellectual debauchery, through which the murder comes to be a deed in being,

with the double power of invocation and growth. At first, indeed, he forgets it for the images and the sickness which went with it, and when he wakes to it he finds that instead of feeling it behind him it has somehow got ahead of him and he is driven to catch up to it. Instead of freedom, power, completeness, he is more at loss than ever, and more incoherent, there are only "scraps and shreds of thought," suspicions, excitements, alarms, and fresh temptations to extraordinary declarations of himself. This is, of course, the first phase of the Punishment for the Crime, that having striven by the crime to reach a complete solution of his incomplete life, he should find himself not only less complete than ever and more wayward but actually perilously incoherent, with a personality on the verge of dissipation. He lives in a haunted vertigo, into which for the time he can invoke only the shrieking phantoms of rage and dread. He is in the position, so humiliating to his continuing pride, where he is completely powerless as the perfectly good man, as powerless as Sonia. There is nothing he can yet see to do for himself, and nothing any longer that he can do for others. When the police send for him about his IOU which his landlady had sold, he feels himself possessed by "a gloomy sensation of agonising, everlasting solitude and remoteness," and knows that it will never be possible for him to appeal to anyone in any circumstance of life. There is a sense in which Dostoevsky might have stopped at this point, for he had put Raskolnikov on the path at the end of which lay the meaning of his Crime as Punishment. For as in the Christian psychology no man may complete himself in deed, so the meaning of a deed can never be completed within the history of the man who enacts it. Only the judgment completes either the man, or his deed, or his meaning.

But both the deed and the meaning can continue in their course of meaningfulness. The growth of meaning is infinite. At the moment he feels his agonising solitude form consciously within him he hears the police discuss the murder; that is, it is given to him from outside for the first time, and as not his murder, but as an object in no one's possession; at once he is driven to confess,

to seize it for his own, but a combination of the fumes of paint and the pang of creation cause him to faint. When he comes to, he goes out leaving a strange impression and a potent silence behind him.

Out of that strangeness and silence grows the pursuit-game which occupies the rest of the book, for Raskolnikov having decided that suspicions may have been roused about him from his peculiar conduct, begins playing a complicated and eccentric game, or rather a set of games. He pursues the police, eggs the police on to pursue him, and himself both pursues the murder, the acknowledgment of it, and denies it whenever he comes face to face with it. The result of all this rash, tortuous, and vain activity is that he creates such an image of the murder that at last it overwhelms him. He plays his hands so that others play to him. In the event, there is nothing for anyone to believe about him except the extraordinary reality of the murder. He could not have made more certain of his arrest and imprisonment had that been his entire object. Only he delayed it, played with it, encouraged it to develop, in order to get the full savour of it and of himself.

First he rouses unconscious suspicions in Razumihin, then in Zossim—of the doctor in whom the suspicions may have been quite conscious, for he looked at Raskolnikov “curiously” whenever there was opportunity, and especially after that scene where Raskolnikov himself first realises the murder in a parallel and arbitrary image which brims and trembles as you look at it. It is that image which comes when Raskolnikov lies abed listening to the doctor and Razumihin talk of the murder, and how a house-painter has been mixed up in it. Nastasya, who is present, bursts out that Lizaveta was murdered, too.

“Lizaveta,” murmured Raskolnikov hardly audibly.

“Lizaveta, who sold old clothes. Didn’t you know her? She used to come here. She mended a shirt for you, too.”

Raskolnikov turned to the wall where in the dirty, yellow paper he picked out one clumsy, white flower with brown lines on it and began examining how many petals there were in it, how many scallops in the petals

and how many lines on them. He felt his arms and legs as lifeless as though they had been cut off. He did not attempt to move, but stared obstinately at the flower.

It is so that the murder is brought home by the housemaid's first mention of the other and incidental murder of Lizaveta. We feel what passed in Raskolnikov's mind, and feel it as if it passed in his face, and in his hands, too: quite as if he had plucked the scalloped petals of the clumsy white flower off the wallpaper. Razumihin, who was simple, may have seen nothing, but the doctor, looking at this dissenting soul, surely saw what Raskolnikov saw in the flower even if he could not then have named it. The blankest or the most conventional image is, as Dostoevsky knew, the best to hold the deepest symbol if only there is enough tension present when it is named. It is only another instance of this device that when Raskolnikov is about to go into the bar where he meets and gives himself away to Zametov, he first sees a good many drunken women, some of forty and some of seventeen, almost all of whom "had blackened eyes." Raskolnikov, who had gone out to end *this*, as he put it to himself, reflects upon this bevy with blackened eyes and pocked cheeks, that even the worst life is precious.

"Only to live, to live and live! Life, whatever it may be! . . . How true it is! Good God, how true! Man is a vile creature! . . . And vile is he who calls him vile for that," he added a moment later.

Whereupon he proceeds to risk his life, to make it precious, by playing like Hamlet on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, upon the suspicious nerves of Zametov the police clerk as he drank tea in a restaurant. This scene, like the two great scenes with Porfiry, and like the last scene with Svidrigailov, show Raskolnikov clinging with a kind of ultimate shuddering tenacity to his original proud role of the extraordinary man, the role of Napoleon within the little man, and clinging the more desperately because in the act of playing it he sees the role is false, the role of the condemned man whose life is thereby sweet.

What else happens at the same time, the history of the growth

of the Punishment along with the realization of the Crime, is of course present in these scenes, but it has been instigated in other scenes—those with his mother and sister and Luzhin and Razumihin and the Marmeladovs; and it is perfected in other scenes still, those with Sonia especially, though these scenes might well be lifeless and pointless without their counterparts with Porfiry and Svidrigailov. There is a synergy—a working together and back and forth—between these counterparts much as there is a synergy between the two parts, the proud, self-willed part and the meek, submissive part of Raskolnikov's character. This working together takes place, and the resultant unity is seen, not because there is any logical or organic connection between the parts, but because, quite to the contrary, the conflicting elements are dramatised in association, in parallels that, as they say, never actually meet except as opposites. The more nearly they seem to be forced into meeting, the more disparate they actually show themselves to be. The fusion, if it can be called a fusion, is in the dramatic *product* of the conflicting elements, not of the elements themselves.

It is something along these lines, I think, that the theory of the "doubles" in Dostoevsky must be approached, and this whether we think of single characters or of whole books and the doubleness of the conflicts within either. Let us look at Raskolnikov, who is usually thought of as a typical Dostoevsky Double. He is self-willed and will-less, he is proud and he becomes humiliated, he loves Sonia and hates her at the same moment, he is fond of Razumihin and cannot tolerate him, he is both on the edge of confession and of anathema all along, he is good to the point of giving all that he has and evil to the point of taking life; and in short there is neither certainty nor limit to any of his moods or acts; any role is dominant for the moment to another role that may at once take its place because it has been really dominant underneath. But he is not these roles in turn, he is the product of all their playing taken together. In any pair, the one may be taken as the idea of the other, and the other the reality of the idea, and the only alternation is as to which, at a given moment, is idea and

which reality. The relation is rather like that between the idea of murder and the image of the white flower on the wallpaper, where we can reverse it and say it is the relation between the idea of the flower and the image of the murder. What we get is a kind of steady state precariously maintained between the conflicting elements. The balance tips, but it recovers in the act of tipping. We should feel it as we feel similar physiological states in the body—only as the disturbance and forward drive of life—were it not that the language itself and Dostoevsky's taste for seeing the opposite to every presented element have together a tendency to formularise pure types, and then to ignore for the moment what does not exemplify the type. What happens is, by language and its dialectic mode, that Dostoevsky's imagination arrests, for the maximum possible amount of attention, the moments when the balance does tip from love to hate, from pride to humiliation, from idea to deed, from image to tension, and by the arrest, by the attention which is bent upon the moment of arrest, we see how the one in each case fecundates the other. We seem to see deeply what they make together by seeing wilfully what they are apart.

By a little progress of this notion, we can say that Raskolnikov is balanced in turn against the other characters in this novel, and that the other characters and their stories make something with Raskolnikov which is quite different from anything found in them as types, though there would be no product of their whole conflict if there was not a great deal that was living within each type, from Razumihin to Porfiry to Svidrigailov to Sonia, and all the rest. As illustration, let us take first the Marmeladov family, and consider by what astonishing luck it was that Dostoevsky thought of putting them into the history of Raskolnikov and the punishment of his crime. They were to have been, the whole little crowd of them, a novel all to themselves called "The Drunkards," a novel showing, no doubt, all the ills and humiliations that can come from the head of a poor family who has given over to heavy drinking. The luck is that Dostoevsky had them all going, with past and present and future, when Raskolnikov happened to meet old Marmeladov in the tavern and heard his humiliating con-

fession with such apparently inexplicable sympathy. The truth is that he has something deeply in common with him, and again that Marmeladov has something which he has not yet but which he must have. What they have in common comes out when Marmeladov says that he has *nowhere to turn* except to his sick and somewhat crazy wife. Raskolnikov sees that it is not Marmeladov the good-natured drunk that turns, but Marmeladov humiliated, on hands and knees, with his hair pulled, Marmeladov in the mud which he Raskolnikov has not yet reached, but will reach in good time. Man grows used to everything, the scoundrel, says Raskolnikov, and adds: But what if he is not a scoundrel?

The scene is something like the great scenes in Dickens, caricature by direct observation, with the difference that Dostoevsky—and this is perhaps the way Dostoevsky himself read Dickens—replaces zest of observation for its own sake with the severity of attention that is based upon zeal, and replaces the anguish of social consciousness with the dignity of religion. Marmeladov, like Micawber, is able to represent much beyond himself because he is something of a buffoon; he can talk and act for talking and acting's sake; and he can be honest, and let himself go, just to see what will happen; he can see himself at his worst in order to be at his best. And so he does; he produces, to show himself at his utmost, and for the sake of Raskolnikov, for the sake of this new strange novel in which he unconsciously finds himself, the character and personality of Sonia, whom Raskolnikov needs as complement and salvation, and whom the novel needs for mechanics and plot. And not Sonia only, he also produces, by just the agency of his being, scenes in which all manner of things which bear on the novel can take place. His death, his funeral, the lyric insanity of Katerina his wife and her death-dance in the streets, all these are provided with new and enriched context by the accidental meeting in the tavern of the *distrain* Raskolnikov and the drunken buffoon Marmeladov. And not only Marmeladov himself, but each of his family, as he precipitates their fates through his drunkenness and buffoonery, add to the context of Raskolnikov's growing fate.

Together they furnish him with his own opposite. As he is the person who above all must act, they are the persons who must be acted upon. He is the criminal, and they are the victims, victims generally and all the way through in much the same way that the old pawnbroker was in Raskolnikov's eyes "ripe" to be murdered. No degradation is too great for the old drunkard who has nowhere to turn; you have only to put fresh degradation in his way and he will take it up with gusto. Katerina, too, eager to find insult in everyone's speech, in his absence or in his presence, imagines insult and injury upon herself at every opportunity. The children, even, with their illness and their rags cannot be treated except with brutality. And as for Sonia, she is not only eager and willing, she fairly demands further humiliation. By prostituting herself, this thin, bird-like creature, almost without a body, shows herself as inviting at best further depravity; for surely no one not depraved, no one not desiring to sack the *last* citadel of integrity, would have any use for her. Sonia had to come from such a family, for only out of the experience of such utter humiliation could her own perfect humility grow. As they are damned so she is blessed, by the enormous shift in significance caused by the shift of a single syllable. It is Gide, who knew Dostoevsky well, who observed that where humility opened the gates of heaven, humiliation opened those of hell. Sonia's blessedness is built upon the bottomlessness of their hell. She accepts, and makes into inner strength, a worse stage of the experience which tore them apart.

Thus, as Raskolnikov comes into contact with Marmeladov and his wife, as he probes them with his intellect, they absorb his sense of himself into a kind of private hell, an abyss beyond soundings, quite off the continental shelf of consciousness which his intellect, however demoniac, can reach. But Sonia, and this is the secret of her personality, can no more be penetrated by Raskolnikov's intellect than her soul can be ravished through the degradation of her body. That is her attraction as a prostitute: that she cannot be prostituted in anything that she has to offer; and that is her power over Raskolnikov, the power of perfect submissiveness which in another place Dostoevsky calls the greatest power in the world:

it is the power that he cannot attain by any deed, but that can be attained by imitation, by suffering what she has suffered. It is the power of her suffering, the happiness of it, that not so much overcomes him as it infects or fecundates him. For he is not overcome, though it is promised that he will be; he fights back, the very feeling of her goodness, his very sense of the stigma of her faith, aggravates his pride and the intellectual structure upon which his pride is built, so that when he goes to her for comfort and strength he finds that he has to torture her, and to repel her at every level. The love he feels for her is also and simultaneously hate, and there is no difference between the emotions as he feels them, only as he intellectually knows what they are. And this is an example of the profound psychological rightness of Dostoevsky's judgment, for surely it takes only a pause for judgment to see that as hate or pride is the burden Raskolnikov carries so love or humility is the *burden* of Sonia's life. If she feels his burden as love and accepts it as of nature, he must feel the burden of her love as intolerable. He is indeed a kind of Prodigal Son who finds the love with which he is welcomed the very burden from which he ran away in the first place. It was not of Sonia that he made the following remark but thinking of her and just before seeing her, so it fits all the more: "Oh, if only I were alone and no one loved me and I too had never loved anyone! *Nothing of all this would have happened.*"

It will be remembered that earlier in the book Razumihin has explained to Douania that her brother is perhaps a person incapable of love. Razumihin may have meant only that Raskolnikov is a lonely fellow, but he was literally right as well; no one can be said to love who does not feel as acceptable the burden of love in return, and who does not feel, too, that in loving someone positively, he is imposing the most difficult of human burdens. Sonia knows this in herself, by intuition directed inwards as well as outwards, as a condition of her being, and it is to that double burden that she submits.

Like the crime which existed *between* the old pawnbroker, so between Sonia and Raskolnikov there exists her intuition of love,

which she feels so strongly that he *must* know, that gradually by a contagion from her understanding he does know it. It is a love, this unassailable love of the unsmirchable prostitute, that has nothing to do with sex. Not that it might not have been sexual, and even might have taken the means of a kind of ultimate lechery of the spirit, and still have been within the Christian insight, but that Dostoevsky was unable ever to create a character or a mood which showed more than the most superficial aspects of sexual awareness. His people were not eunuchs or in any way deprived of sex but they were born without it. It is love *manqué* that Dostoevsky deals with, love *malgré-lui*; and it is for this reason perhaps that Dostoevsky is able to show love as pure spiritual renunciation. That is why, too, in what was to others the romantic fancy of purity in a prostitute, he sees a kind of exorbitant and omnivorous reality: a true dramatic enactment of the idea of purity. That is why, again, he so often concerns his characters with the idea of debauching young girls, girls before puberty, in whom sex as anyone else would have understood it would not have ripened, so that the debauchery would be of the actor alone.

If these remarks help explain the character and power of Sonia who is of the character of the saint, they help with the others as well, most particularly with the riddle of Svidrigailov, to whom we shall come in a moment for his own sake, but whom now we shall consider in his relation with the character of Douania, Raskolnikov's sister. This young lady is painted as all abloom with normality; she and her mother belong in Dostoevsky's long gallery of simple, intelligent, sincere, generous, impulsive, and dependably decent women, young and old, of whom there are samples in almost every one of his novels—as, to give but one example, Mme. Epanchin and her daughter Aglaia in *The Idiot*. Always they serve the same purpose, to act as foils or background for the extraordinary actions of distorted or driven individuals, such as Raskolnikov and Myshkin. They preserve their identity and their normal responsiveness through every form of violence and disorder; it is their normality which, by contrast, promotes the meaningfulness of the good and bad angels, the light and the

dark angels, whose actions make the stories. Nothing in themselves but attractive types, they come to life in terms of the protagonists.

In *Crime and Punishment* they represent the normal conduct from which Raskolnikov departs; they represent the order of society which he tears down and envelops; it is them, their lives, to whom he gives meaning. In the same way Luzhin, the bourgeois on the make, and Lebetziatnikov the nihilist reformer, are caricatures, the one malicious and the other kindly, of normal types of eccentricity within the ordered society which produces at its extremes the super-egotist Raskolnikov and the super-reformer Sonia. But these figures gather part of their meaning from the driven, demoniac, "secret" character of Svidrigailov, the lecher of women and debaucher of souls: the mysterious figure whose evil is concentrated in what is asserted to be, but never shown, his intense and overweening sexuality. As an example of sexual behavior, Svidrigailov is incredible. Sex is Dostoevsky's symbol for a diabolic, destructive power, which he can sense but cannot measure, and which he cannot otherwise name. This aspect of the Svidrigailov type of figure is Dostoevsky's attempt to explain, to dramatise and invoke, a force which he does not seem ever to have understood but which he knows must exist. It is a lonely, awkward, proud sort of power, hovering always on the brink of suicide; it is haunted and haunting; it is the power of the "Other" thing, the other self, the dark side of the self, the substance and drive of that secret world in us which the devil creates, the power which in conventional life—the life which we mostly live—we successfully ignore, so that we tend to estimate its presence in others rather than in ourselves—as if others were our othermost selves. Thus Douania's soul had been imperilled by Svidrigailov's attempt to seduce her, and imperilled precisely by Svidrigailov's technique, which he outlines to Raskolnikov, of assaulting her through purity. He has caused her purity, not her baser emotions but her purity, somehow to desire him, and she had been rescued, in the first instance, in the nick of time: by the confusion, in Marfa Petrovna's eyes, of her purity with her lust. Raskolnikov un-

derstands well enough what the risk is—that his sister may be contaminated, that her decency may somehow come to absorb the temptation which Svidrigailov affords her in the new terms of his generosity. What he does not understand is the means by which the contamination, the trespass, will take place, which is by the frustration of violence on Douania's part when in the lonely room with the locked door, she tries so hard to shoot him. She is left by the desperate effort—by the fruitless tumescence of her spirit—in a very ambiguous state, which the story of Raskolnikov's Crime and Punishment did not have time to develop. One is not sure whether in that scene Douania has absorbed something from Svidrigailov, or whether Svidrigailov has absorbed what he wanted from Douania. Something has passed between them, at any rate, which leaves Svidrigailov either done for or contented, either vastated or fully occupied. In either case his remaining hours are justified—his visit to his little girl fiancée and his farewell present, the adventure in the hotel-room, the mouse in the bed, the five year-old girl whose smile turns in his dream to a harlot's grin, the dream of the flood, which is to say the coming of judgment, and the suicide at dawn. We feel that the enigma of Svidrigailov has either been solved beyond our understanding or that it did not really exist—quite the problem of the devil. At any rate, his function has been fulfilled for everyone but Raskolnikov.

His relations to Raskolnikov have gone beyond those with the others, both in scope and intent, however much they may depend for their actuality upon the others. For Svidrigailov is a foil for the whole story. He comes before the crime, in a way induces the crime to come into being, is the first to perceive the crime, and in a way *finishes* the crime without (since he does not have Raskolnikov's luck in finding Sonia) reaching the punishment. He *is* Raskolnikov in simpler perspective, he is Raskolnikov's other self, a mirror of being into which Raskolnikov never quite dares to look. He is the mystery of Raskolnikov's other self. The sense of him is symbolic, as it always is with mystery. Because he is a mystery beforehand, and exhibits himself mysteriously and provi-

dentially, he gathers meaning as he goes along, but not too clearly. He has the advantage of being not well understood, the figure grasped at but not caught, whom we are always about to understand. In fact we have frequently the sense of understanding him perfectly until we stop to query what it is we understand, when we find only that he represents precisely that secret life within us which drives us into incomprehensible actions. Like the character of Stavrogin in *The Possessed*, of whom Dostoevsky says in his notes that he was not *meant* to be understood, but was meant rather to be a reservoir of the portentous, the possible, the mysterious, he is the symbolic clarification of that which cannot be expressed other than symbolically. He is the promise upon which we lean, knowing that it cannot be kept. He recedes like the horizon that follows us, only when we look.

Perhaps we may say that Svidrigailov envelops the disorder brought about by Raskolnikov's crime by imaging a kind of order which we cannot reach but which is always about to overwhelm us. He is a symbol of the mystery of the abyss, and it is a great witness to the depth of Dostoevsky's imagination that he is able to create in the flesh, with eyes too blue and flesh too youthful, such figures at will.

It is no less a test of Dostoevsky's skill—not his depth but his skill—that he is able to employ the one remaining major character in the book without, as it were, creating him at all. I mean, of course, that thirty-five year old roly-poly of the disengaged intellect called Porfiry, that man whose life, as he insists to Raskolnikov, is already finished, who has no other life to live, and nothing to do with what remains to him but probe and prance intellectually. Porfiry is so much a victim of moral fatigue that he is beneath every level of being but that of intellectual buffoonery. He represents order; he understands desire, ambition, all forms of conduct, but he knows nothing of the sources and ends of conduct, except that he can catch at them, in the midst of the game of the drowning man which he plays so long and so skilfully, like so many straws that only just elude his dancing fingers. But he is unreal, except as an agency of the plot, some-

thing to make the wheels go round; he is a fancy of the pursuing intellect whom Raskolnikov must have invented had he not turned up of his own accord. As Svidrigailov and Sonia between them represent the under-part, and the conflict in the under-part, of Raskolnikov's secret self, so Porfiry represents the maximum possible perfection of the artificial, intellectual self under whose ministrations Raskolnikov *reasons* himself into committing his crime, and who therefore is the appropriate instrument for driving him to the point of confessing it. It is Porfiry, who has no morals and no faith, who is all the proud game of intellect, who whenever he comes to sack Raskolnikov leaves him in a state of collapse, just as it is either Svidrigailov or Sonia who gives him strength. Porfiry knows what he must do, and can point it out to him in the example of the peasant who came forward to take the suffering of the crime upon his guiltless shoulders, he knows all the intellect can know, and perhaps knows that it must collapse, but he cannot push Raskolnikov over the brink, because he knows it only conventionally, by rote. He understands the Crime, because he represents that against which it was committed, and knows with what it was committed, but he cannot touch the Punishment, the completion of the Crime, because it must take place in a region of the soul beyond his grasp, the region which reason, argument, all the armament of order only clutter up and from which they must be swept, the region where the assumption of guilt by all that is innocent within the self takes place through the submission of the sinful, acting self to the faithful, waiting self, which waits, in Dostoevsky's primitive Christian insight, only to be created.

I think we have touched both upon the elements that go to make up the obvious and immediate impact of Raskolnikov's crime and its consequences in action, and upon the elements which as we understand them as exhibited in the various characters leave us all—not Russians, not fanatics of humiliation, not the distorted shadowy figures of Dostoevsky's novel alone, but all of us without exception deeply implicated in the nature of the Crime. A word remains with which to fasten upon the nature of the Crime

an indication of the nature of the Punishment. I do not know that there is a word ready to hand, for we have fallen quite out of the way of thinking in insights and images with the simple, direct intensity which was Dostoevsky's second nature. We lack the anterior conviction, the conviction before we begin to think, with which Dostoevsky mastered the relationship of man to God. But at least in saying that, we state Dostoevsky's major and abiding theme. To punish Raskolnikov, to bring him to retribution, to atonement, Dostoevsky had only to create his relationship to God, and to show at the same time how that relationship sprang from the nature of man as a creature of God quite apart from the structure of human society as an institution of men's minds. Dostoevsky believed that as Christ the innocent one took upon himself the suffering of all the innocent ones in the world, and so redeemed them along with the guilty, so the individual man has in him an innocent part which must take on the suffering caused by the guilty part. As he saw it, in our crime we create our guilt. Perhaps the commonplace example of false arrest will begin to make an analogue for what he meant. Which of us, falsely arrested, would not at once begin to assess his guilt, even for the crime which brought about the false arrest? And you would assess this guilt the more clearly because you were aware of the haphazard, the hazarded, character of your innocence. Similarly, the depth of your guilt would be measured by the depth of your faith, which would then, if you had imagination enough, transform you.

It should be emphasized that it was transformation, not reformation, that Dostoevsky envisaged. Reformation would have dealt with the mere guilty act against society. Transformation, through suffering, is alone able to purge the guilt of being.

Finally, we may draw some comparisons, in this search for means of clarifying the nature of Dostoevsky's notion of punishment, from recent history in our own country. When Mooney was released from his generation of false imprisonment, it soon turned out that he had no symbolic dignity, but represented rather a mere miscarriage of institutional justice; and so with the Scotts-

boro boys; so, too, with Dreyfus in the last century, for Dreyfus had no dignity. But if we think of Sacco and Vanzetti, does there not arise within us at once a sense that their great and terrifying symbolic dignity is due to Vanzetti having assumed, with profound humility, the whole devastating guilt of the industrial society which killed him? Whether Vanzetti was innocent or guilty in law has become an irrelevant question. But the guilt which his last words and letters, his last conduct, somehow expiated, which was our guilt, remains permanently in question; for Vanzetti, like Raskolnikov, showed himself in the humiliation of his punishment, in humble relation to God.

Zero Song

By June Cannan



Zero stacked on zero, contour lies
A square abstracted, pin's-top moon
Converges now, begins too soon
Its long, fanatic rise.

Now the tropic illness of the sky
Is cast into a frozen tiger's eye,
Clouds are salt, the nauseous sea is dry;
In rhythmless, abandoned air the wind is face,
And there, behind, reflected mind counts time.

Now the earth is angular and charred, and we
With hard heart-hooks and sterile soul-saws stand
In this unscheduled moonlight, stand in static throngs
Mechanically ejaculating crow-caws for our songs.

The Coronal

By Kimon Friar



Imagination is that centaur born
In the slack hours between night and dawn,
In ecstasy midwived by ignorance;
And in that jangling dance
Attuned by angels of profanity.
Half man, half beast, his instinct is
Gangrened by mind's analysis,
Acknowledged only by necessity.

And I, who am by nature foe to truth,
Denied him shelter from idealist youth;
Exposed his body, brutal and impure,
To elemental war
Which stripped his wounds and sinews to the bone;
And in the contours of his skull
Found perfection beautiful,
And claimed his dazzling substance for my own.

Now do I wear perfection like a wreath
Although to wear this coronal were death;
And in the doubled hollows of his eyes
Expose the brave disguise
On which the darkness of his light has shone,
Until beneath indecencies
Of mind and motive the mind sees
The clear articulation of the bone.

Rose and Thunderstorm

SYMBOLISM IN DANTE AND SHAKESPEARE

By Frederick Morgan



"Oh grace abounding, wherein I presumed to fix my look on the eternal light so long that I consumed my sight thereon!

"Within its depths I saw ingathered, bound by love in one volume, the scattered leaves of all the universe;

"substance and accidents and their relations, as though together fused, after such fashion that what I tell of is one simple flame."¹

I

THUS DANTE, at the end of his long journey, expresses the ultimate paradox of the many in One. In his vision of God, Dante restates the "meaning" of his poem on its highest level. He himself, by means of the sacred fourfold symbolism, has bound the scattered leaves of the universe into one volume, and nothing remains but his absorption, in the last line of the poem, into the everlasting Tri-unity, "the Love that moves the Sun and the other stars." The last image in the *Divine Comedy* is that of the Eternal Rose, formed by the ranks of blessed souls, which remains beyond time and space, in perpetual adoration of God the Eternal Sun, and absorbed in the warmth of the Divine Love. This culminating image, richly presented with description of the elements forming the Rose, of the inter-action between Rose and Sun, and of Dante's final apotheosis, becomes all-inclusive of reality; for it is the ultimate summation of the *Divine Comedy*, as the *Divine Comedy* is the ultimate summation of all experience. The dual image of Sun and Rose contains in itself the entire meaning of the poem, as it contained for the Middle Ages the entire meaning of reality. It also mirrors, in

¹ *Paradiso*, xxxiii, 82-90 (Wicksteed translation).

small compass, the "total effect" of the poem, for all the modes of reality described heretofore have their roots in this image-concept. I shall postpone investigation of exactly what is meant by "meaning" and "total effect," and attempt a rough explanation of how the unsurpassed unification and coherence of the poem is achieved.

The root concepts to the understanding of the philosophical structure of the *Divine Comedy* are the "insight symbol" and the "fourfold method"² The insight symbol is the symbol which combines a particular image with an abstract idea of, or insight into, the nature of the universe as a whole. This is the type of imagery used almost exclusively by Dante, and it is significant that when he resorts to arbitrary or representational symbolism, as in his explanation of the source of the rivers of Hell,³ it is to the temporary detriment of his poetic effectiveness. This concept solves the vexed problems of the "allegorical" nature of the *Divine Comedy*. The poem is an allegory, but being based on the insight symbol, it avoids the arbitrary, built-up quality of even such fine allegories as the *Faery Queen* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The fourfold method is a concept so characteristic of the Middle Ages that it is difficult for the modern mind to grasp. Each action or event could be interpreted symbolically on four levels of truth. These were (I quote from Dunbar⁴): "the literal (including words in their standard usage, and symbols of the arbitrary-association and descriptive types), and three 'symbolic' interpretations, called allegorical, tropological, and anagogical, all being of the nature of insight symbolism. The symbolical interpretation called allegorical included truths in relation to humanity as a whole, and here the Christian of course included truths in regard to Christ as the Head of humanity. The interpretation called tropological applied specifically to the moral lesson which might

² What is here presented in outline form, for the sake of easy reference for the ensuing deductions, may be found analyzed in great and fascinating detail in *Symbolism in Medieval Thought and Its Culmination in the Divine Comedy* by H. Flanders Dunbar.

³ *Inferno*, xiv, 94-120.

⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 19.

be learned from any event. The trope was of great comfort to ethical traditions such as the Hebraic. The final truth was that of the anagoge—ultimate truth, belonging neither to time nor to space, such knowledge as had been dear to the Greeks since the formulation of Plato's absolute Ideas. These four meanings were sought particularly in the two sources of external revelation, nature and scripture—the spatial, and the historical or temporal world." With these two tools, forged for him and his age by a long historical process, Dante was admirably equipped for artistic expression of the totality of experience. His material and his philosophic frame of reference were at hand.

Starting with his private experience, Dante created, by means of insight symbolism and the fourfold method, an all-inclusive work of art. He did it by projecting his personal experience against an intellectual background of abstract ideas, theological, philosophical and political,⁵ and by dramatizing the resultant tension in such a way that all experience finds a place in the ultimate framework of ideas, and the ideas themselves, diving down from their higher world, are constantly manifested in experience. This is not the only way to attain an all-inclusive art, but it is the fitting and proper way for an age like Dante's. Dante's visionary journey in the first two books is capable of symbolic extension in two dimensions according to the literal, allegorical and tropological levels. The culmination, or anagogical level, is reserved for the *Paradiso*. Note that this technique is directly in keeping with the literal narrative, for it is only after passing through the horror of hell and the purification in Purgatory that Dante is fit to receive, in Paradise, ultimate truth (the anagoge). Dante's journey symbolizes on the allegorical level the evolution of his political thought, ending in the reconciliation between the Guelph and Ghibelline attitudes; on the tropological, it symbolizes his moral development, with the reconciliation of natural law and human will. But this grouping is itself truth only of the first order,

⁵ In the medieval sense of pertaining to the organization of humanity for the greatest end good. See Dante: *De Monarchia*.

i.e., that determined by the figure of Dante interpreted as literally himself. Its anagoge is expressed, again according to the four-fold method, in the first four planetary heavens of the *Paradiso*. In the sphere of the Moon, truth is revealed him with regard to his literal journey; in that of Mercury, it relates to his political development; in that of Venus, to his intellectual and moral development. In the Sun, symbol of God, is found the ultimate anagoge of the first order of truth. It stands for the ultimate vision in so far as it can be perceived in terms of a single personality. Truth of the second order consists in substituting for the individual (Dante) the figure of Christ, the Head of humanity, and truth of the third order relates to the journey of the soul in search of mystic union with God. Again, the truth in each of these orders is threefold, and again, the anagogai are manifest in Paradise, with the vision of the Eternal Rose under the Eternal Sun as the final and crowning anagoge to the *Paradiso* and to the work as a whole. Thus the action of the *Divine Comedy* can be said to proceed along nine levels at once. This is not a fact which need worry the reader, but it accounts for the richness of association of the whole. It is the machinery by which reality is grasped in the structure of the work. The universe of Dante is coherent in all respects, from the Triune God, Prime Mover of the spheres, to Satan, ever freezing himself more securely in Cocytus;⁶ geographically, philosophico-theologically, morally, and anagogically in God himself, who is at once the summit of reality and its entirety.

The language of Dante, by means of which this manifold reality is built up, is of the greatest simplicity. As Mr. Eliot says,⁷ the language of the *Divine Comedy* comes as close to being the universal European language as has been attained. There is a minimum of verbal complication, regardless of the complexity of the thought. The images are straightforward and undistorted. Each figure comes through with clarity and precision. There is a

⁶ Inf., xxiv, 46-54.

⁷ T. S. Eliot: *Dante*.

reason why this must be so; the essence of the poem is the inter-relationship of idea with insight symbol, therefore the expression of idea and the presentation of symbol-image must be as simple as possible. The concrete half of the symbol has no function but to fall into position, to be a well-defined point, a meeting-place of the levels of truth.

To consider the *Divine Comedy* in its entirety once again, what is it that is symbolized by the work as a whole? Let us consider some of Dante's own words on the subject⁸: "And when he has said that he was in the place of Paradise, described by circumlocution, he goes on to say 'that he saw certain things which he who thence descends cannot relate'; and he tells the reason, saying that 'the intellect is so engulfed' in the very thing for which it longs, which is God, 'that memory cannot follow'." And later⁹: "Then he says that 'he will tell those things which he was able to retain concerning the celestial kingdom';¹⁰ and this, he says, is 'the matter of his work'."

The *Divine Comedy* is not an attempt to express the inexpressible, but it is an attempt to portray, by means of art, the relationship between human life and the ultimate inexpressible. The expression of this tension, the basic tension of all art, is the poem's "total effect." This same expression, or, incorrectly, its translation into abstract terms, is its "meaning." But we must never substitute even a masterly philosophical paraphrase for a concrete organism. As work of art, the poem exists, an object in itself, symbolic of the poet's comprehensive grasp of the human-divine relationship.

II

Juxtaposition of Dante and Shakespeare is such well-established procedure that a word of explanation is in order to clarify the method being used. It has been rightly observed in many quarters

⁸ Epistle X to Can Grande, 28.

⁹ *ibidem* 30.

¹⁰ The epistle is concerned with the *Paradiso* only.

that a correct interpretation of the sum achievement of the two would demand consideration of the entire body of Shakespeare's plays as a parallel to the *Divine Comedy*. However, since my purpose is not to make a complete analysis of the two men, but to show their contrasting modes of symbolic usage, it has seemed legitimate to parallel Dante's masterpiece with but one of Shakespeare's plays. I have chosen *King Lear* because of all the tragedies it comes closest to breaking out of the dramatic form altogether in its striving for ultimate comprehensiveness, and because it is a characteristic product of Shakespeare's style¹¹ at its best.

All agree that there are dramatic flaws in this work, but few will deny that they are far outweighed by, or rather, absorbed into, the total effect of the whole. For all except the Voltaires, *King Lear* possesses poetic unity, and it is the make-up of this unity, as it was in the case of the *Divine Comedy*, that must concern us. What is the nature of the world of Lear and his daughters? Is it conceived on the abstract level and illustrated by the imagery, or is it created largely by Shakespeare's actual words? I think it is clear that in *Lear*, as contrasted, for example, to *Timon of Athens*, the latter answer is the true one. This is what we mean when we grant it a poetical unity rather than a philosophical one. To understand *Lear*, we must examine, not a general abstract framework, but particular modes of imagery, whose use determines that total effect which we are investigating. Here again, as in the case of Dante, I shall not be showing how an effect follows from a cause; I shall be pointing to a part of an organism, which is functioning to the advantage of the whole.

 Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace:
The wretch that thou hast blown into the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts.¹²

¹¹ Distinctions between Shakespeare's early, middle and late styles are not to the point here.

¹² iv, i, 6-9.

This is the air of Lear's world. It is not the crystal air of the *Divine Comedy*, but an all-enveloping force, built of conflict and uncertainty, and big with its "cataracts and hurricanoes."

King Lear is an exceptional tragedy, because in it evil is expressed as an integral part of the natural world. This accounts for the painful irony that is central to the work. The situation, abstractly conceived, is based on a fundamental, black-and-white dualism. How can such extremes of good and evil, represented by Cordelia and by Goneril and Regan, spring from the same soil and flower side by side? How can greatness and petty folly be wedded together as they are in the Lear of the first part of the play? In the sub-plot, the contrast is even sharper, almost to the point of burlesque. The world of Lear, composed of good and evil elements forever unresolved, is convulsed with the strain exerted by these forces. In the mind of Lear himself, this struggle is mirrored to the extent of chaos, to be beautifully resolved at the end. It is significant that there is no attempt to theologize the conflict. There is no rationalized body of belief, no fixed reference point. Uncertainty is the only certainty. In *Lear*, divinity is multiple and shattered. It is the "gods" who control the action, and these gods are changeable and capricious; they are but projections of human states of mind.

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.¹³

Gloucester's famous remark is an example of what I have been saying. Later in the play, when Gloucester is humbly reconciled to his fate, he refers to the gods as "mighty" and even as "gentle." When Edgar's "foul fiend" comes to the fore in the third act, it is once more a naturalistic device. Like the "gods," Edgar's familiar is a local and uncertain creature, a symbol of natural evil.

This play, then, presents the moral struggle embodied in the world of nature. It is accomplished by making nature itself the basic locus of evil. The evil characters in *Lear* have an animal-

¹³ iv, i, 36-37.

istic link to the earth, and no supernatural associations whatsoever. The working out of the dualism in the poetry leads to the imagery of strain on which Miss Spurgeon puts so much emphasis.¹⁴ Along with this insistence on violence, with the use of such verbs as rack, twist, scourge, wrench, crack, etc., it seems to me that there is a closely related use of imagery whose business is to express things of nature as being intrinsically evil. In both uses, poetic force is attained through the conflict, as expressed in the image, between the present existence of evil and the implied longing for good.

The note of division is sounded in the first lines of the play. Immediately after, Edmond is introduced with a jest:

KENT: I cannot conceive you.

GLOU.: Sir, This young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed.¹⁵

This is the first use of the sexual imagery which runs through the play. Sexual activity, as a basic natural phenomenon, is portrayed as evil in *Lear*, and referred to with callous brutality or incredibly violent hatred. Other specific uses of imagery having a direct bearing on the two central themes are the following:

Images of the monstrous or abnormal in nature; for example,

The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite. . . .¹⁶

Or again,

Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
Than the sea-monster.¹⁷

These examples may be classified as extreme forms of the violence imagery, which is so pervasive that no example is necessary. As Miss Spurgeon points out, images of this sort occur in almost

¹⁴ Spurgeon: *Shakespeare's Imagery*, 338-343.

¹⁵ i, i, 12-16.

¹⁶ i, i, 116-118.

¹⁷ i, iv, 280-282.

every speech. Another special form is the eye-and-blindness imagery. When Kent says:¹⁸

See better, Lear; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye—,

he is both foreshadowing the action and inaugurating a series of such images. They are generally conveyed in terms of violence, for example,

Old fond eyes,
Beweep this curse again, I'll pluck ye out.¹⁹

The blinding of Gloucester crystallizes this imagery in the plot-structure in the same way that the passion of Goneril and Regan for Edmund serves as correlative, in the action, to the sexual images.

Then there is the animal imagery. This has been commented on by so many critics²⁰ that I shall merely indicate it as being the general locus for expressions of violence, of which the "monster" images, mentioned above, are extreme examples. In this play, it is the characteristic device by which Shakespeare imposes the moral quality of evil on the natural world.

These modes of imagery, and other less important ones, vary in frequency and intensity in accordance with the pitch of the action. (This variation, incidentally, is paralleled by alternation of prose and blank verse in similar relationship). At the moments of greatest stress, the language of the characters, and particularly of Lear himself, attains an unparalleled force and concentration of imagery. In the third act, at a great crisis in the play, the new imagery of storm and elemental violence appears, and Lear bids the "all-shaking thunder" to "smite flat the thick rotundity of the world."²¹ Finally, at the end of the play, a note of resolution enters the imagery with the introduction of the themes of death,

¹⁸ i, i, 158-159.

¹⁹ i, iv, 322-323.

²⁰ Notably A. C. Bradley and G. Wilson Knight.

²¹ iii, ii, 6-7.

He hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.²²

and of fate,

The wheel is come full circle.²³

But the main body of the imagery remains as harsh as ever. The change comes not in the type of imagery (see the "rack" above), but in the attitude taken towards it. This attitude mirrors the resolution which takes place inside Lear. Lear's world does not change; the dualism remains. But the conflict is resolved artistically through the purification of the hero and of the audience.

In discussing Dante, I mentioned his use of "insight symbol"; in speaking of Shakespeare, I restricted myself to the term "imagery." This distinction indicates differences between the two, and accounts for the analysis of Shakespeare's imagery which I have just outlined. For whereas in Dante, the abstract framework is the complex element, the reverse is the case here. It is extremely difficult to find an abstract pattern which accounts for *King Lear*. The only pattern to be found outside of the imagery is that of the action of the play, which clearly does not refer to any external organization of reality. The two strands of action are related, and work themselves out in a sort of counterpoint; certain events which would seem to be too horrible, too unlikely, or even too absurd in real life are joined into a remarkably powerful and convincing whole. But this is part of the process of tragedy. There is no central body of ideas; at most, the play is tinged with a "stoicism" of a rather intangible variety, as Mr. Eliot points out.²⁴

Thus there is danger that we may make *King Lear* "mean" anything we want, as it has no readily formulated "meaning" of its own. This results in the worst kind of romantic criticism,²⁵ and parallels the equally dangerous temptation to reduce Dante

²² v, iii, 314-316.

²³ v, iii, 175.

²⁴ T. S. Eliot: *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca*.

²⁵ See Maeterlinck on *Lear* (in *The Measure of the Hours*).

to his apparent "meaning," i.e., to a dilution of Aquinas. But we have seen that the work possesses a total effect that is unified and powerful. This is its true meaning. *King Lear* is not symbolic of any ultimate metaphysical reality; it is symbolic of a state of mind which embraces this reality, not by abstract grasp, but by intensity of feeling.

To make clear the contrast which I am driving at, let me quote directly from *Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca*: "What every poet starts from is his own emotions . . . The rage of Dante against Florence . . . the deep surge of Shakespeare's general cynicism and disillusionment, are merely gigantic attempts to metamorphose private failures and disappointments. The great poet, in writing himself, writes his time . . . But you can hardly say that Dante believed, or did not believe, the Thomist philosophy; you can hardly say that Shakespeare believed, or did not believe, the mixed and muddled scepticism of the Renaissance . . . I doubt whether belief proper enters into the activity of a great poet, *qua* poet." The difference in total effect which we have observed in the *Divine Comedy* and in *King Lear* results from the different ways in which Dante and Shakespeare handled the transmutation of their original emotional stimuli. Dante reconciled his emotions on the abstract level, he universalized them in terms of a universal philosophy, and having identified idea and feeling, he expressed the fusion in art-form, without losing the basic tension between the two elements. It is this tension, rather than any philosophical perfection, that gives the work its artistic value. Shakespeare, on the other hand, reconciled his emotions in the work of art itself, by building up a situation that would effectively dramatize the inner conflict, and a use of language that would embrace reality by means of the extensive grasp of the imagery.

The Motive For Metaphor

By Wallace Stevens



You like it under the trees in autumn,
Because everything is half dead.
The wind moves like a cripple among the leaves
And repeats words without meaning.

In the same way, you were happy in spring,
With the half colors of quarter-things,
The slightly brighter sky, the melting clouds,
The single bird, the obscure moon—

The obscure moon lighting an obscure world
Of things that would never be quite expressed,
Where you yourself were never quite yourself
And did not want nor have to be,

Desiring the exhilarations of changes:
The motive for metaphor, shrinking from
The weight of primary noon,
The A B C of being,

The ruddy temper, the hammer
Of red and blue, the hard sound—
Steel against intimation, the sharp flash,
The vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X.

The Jungle of The Ear

By Barbara Howes



What deep down one hears
In the jungle of the ear
May be
The early jackal's bark,
The beakéd man's 'peck peck,'
Mosquitoes' muzzy purring,
Rocks' growing;
The dark
Wrinkled inner ear avoids the odour of accuracy,
And it may, too, be Time there, bumbling,
muttering in secrecy.

Listening down the ear,
Far down,
Is madman's practise
(The beakéd one might spring
And grub your vitals out,
The hasty randy God!
The rocks may wish to grow
In silence,
Vent their girth
Shockingly with the spring;
Jackals have bitter teeth;)
Unless one dares to risk
Liver and skeleton
To range the curfew past
The careful ones have set,
Unless

One dares communion with
Black orchid and green sloth.
—The jungle is contagious.—
Less all peace
All pride, unstop the ear
Then. Listen, listen . . .
Mystery comes like March, like lion or lamb;
Mystery sometimes shrieks at us, sometimes purrs.

The Game

By Richard Eberhart



"I am the Poet, who would bring all in view,
Full of servitude to time's imposing spectacle,
Pure ping-pong player to the false and true
That flew from the hand in action's debacle.

"I was that net, over which ghostly fever
Had fixed the spectators, meet-equiposed men;
Subject to capers' angles, science believers,
But that the ball stopped, the air was tenned.

"And I was the cured inventor of the game
Ramified, whose reason made this measure.
Sitting in a sun-lit picture frame
Quiet as all, for their elfin pleasure."

BOOK REVIEWS

Memories of Happy Days: JULIAN GREEN. Harper & Brothers.

In times of unrest and social disorders, when the present has become an unbearable tragedy, when the future is still hidden behind clouds so dark that it would be foolish even to try to guess what it may keep in store for us, man's past is his only refuge. For this reason, in these last two years, a large number of memoirs and diaries have been published. After André Maurois' *I Remember, I Remember*, after Klaus Mann's *The Turning Point*, Julian Green, in *Memories of Happy Days*, brings his contribution to the field of autobiography.

These memories deserve the reader's attention in more than one respect. For the book collector it is a valuable item, the first book that Green wrote in English and which he signed Julian and not Julien. For the critic it will offer the key to the main aspects of Mr. Green's somber stories. As for the French people, it will serve as an example of devotion and loyalty, as a model of dignity in the presence of a great and beloved country temporarily prostrated.

The case of Julian Green, although unusual, is not unique. At the end of the XIX century two of his fellow-countrymen, two poets, had already chosen the French language as their favorite medium of expression: Stuart Merrill, born on Long Island, and Francis Viélé-Griffin from Norfolk, Virginia. Julian Green's father came from Georgia, his mother from Virginia. They had settled in France about 1895, and in 1900 Julian was born in Paris. Three years later the family moved from the rue Rhumkorff to the rue de Passy where they remained for thirty-five years. I suspect that a person with a strangely twisted mind, like Mr. Elliot Paul (taking for granted that Elliot Paul has a mind, which, for anyone who has read his unspeakable *The Last Time I Saw Paris*, is somewhat doubtful) will claim that Julian Green has no right to call himself a Parisian since he never lived in the rue de la Huchette, among drunkards and prostitutes. But all those who know Paris—and Mr. Paul is not one of them—have realized long ago that, in the present century, and particularly since the end of the first World War, the right bank was infinitely more "French" than the left (including the Latin Quarter) which had become a colony of foreigners, a great many of them (the Elliot Paul type) thoroughly undesirable.

In pages full of humor and delicate sensitiveness, Julian Green tells us of his years in school, his experiences during the war when he joined up with the American Field Service, his ambition to become a painter, his short contact with the University of Virginia, and finally the eagerly awaited return to Paris where he was soon going to find himself in a prominent position among the young French novelists. Is that all? No stories of brothels and of drinking bouts? I am sorry to disappoint you, but there are none; Julian Green only mentions that, in the Bois de Boulogne, certain things take place at night which could not be done in the daytime. The reason for such discretion is that if a gentleman wants to pay tribute to the home of a very dear friend whose hospitality he has thoroughly enjoyed (Elliot Paul claims that he loves Paris) he describes the sitting room, the library, and the garden rather than the garbage cans in the backyard,

the kitchen sink or the plumbing fixtures of the bathroom. Julian Green is not only a gentleman, but a very intelligent one. He is still young but his mind is mature and he has gotten long ago over the sophomoric idea (cherished by the romantic school of the 1830's) that the soul of a city shines at its best in the red light districts and the slums. What? No mention of the under dogs, either, no social message in these memoirs, no anathemas against the "haves," no genuflections in front of the "have nots," no waving of red flags, even from a distance? How does the author expect to make any money with a book like that? The author does not. The author never did since the day that he made up his mind to become a writer. When he was awarded prizes, when his name appeared on the list of bestsellers, it was never because he had followed the fashion of the day nor flattered the lower instincts of the reading public. Those who have followed him in his brilliant career, from *Mont-Cinère* to *Varouna* know that he owes his success to his talent only, an extraordinary talent, mysterious and disconcerting, but easily understandable now that we have met, in *Memories of Happy Days*, little Julian in the haunted apartment of the rue de Passy. The child has become a man, he wears today the uniform of the American army, but he still lives among the ghosts which used to pay nightly visits to him and his sisters. "According to my firmest beliefs," writes Julian Green, "the Devil lived in my mother's clothespress, a particularly dark and gloomy closet which opened into my parents' bedroom. Invoking the Evil One was a terrifying if simple ceremony. It consisted of throwing the door of the press suddenly wide open and standing back five or six feet for safety's sake." Then came the invocations which ended with young Julian hiding his face in his mother's lap with groans of terror. When Mr. Green left the exciting apartment of the rue de Passy he took with him the dark and gloomy closet. No one would suspect it. Julian Green looks so very harmless, as harmless as the apartment itself with its conservative furniture, its bourgeois charm and comfort. Who would have thought that from the dark corners weird apparitions would leap out at night and prow about the rooms? Who would think, on seeing Julian Green—a man so quiet, so modest, with the kindest face on earth, as far from Dracula as one can be—that in him too, there is somewhere a strange closet, abode of the Devil? On the 31st of December 1931, he put down in his Diary: "Whatever I write comes in straight line from my childhood." He should have said from the clothespress into which, even now, he cannot resist the temptation to peep again once in a while. There, in an eerie darkness, shadows begin to stir and Julian, fascinated, whispers the three invocations. Slowly the moving forms take shape. Here is Adrienne Mesurat, and at her feet her dead father; now comes Mme. Londe, planning her wicked deeds, and Guéret with his knife, and poor Angèle hiding her hideous scars behind her shawl, and Manuel with his clammy hands, and Monsieur Edme, and Bertrand Lombard. They jump at Julian Green, one at a time, and from the number of his books we know the number of times that he opened the devilish closet. Because the writing desk takes now the place of the mother's reassuring lap, the only way for the indiscreet child to stop the Danse Macabre, is to take hold of the dancers and to imprison them in strongly built novels, where they will remain forever grinning at the readers.

"When I was a child," wrote Julian Green, "owing to my misapprehension of a picture in a history book, I got into my head that France was a real person, a woman with a crown which she doffed at certain times to wear a Phrygian cap, and one of my main sources of worry was that, sooner or later, this person with

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whom I was in love would grow old and eventually die. Hence the strange questions I used to ask my mother: "How old is France? Is she twenty, or thirty? Do you think she will live a long time?" Now the woman has fallen and only her crown remains, the indestructible crown to which, for many centuries, her poets, her musicians, her painters, her novelists have added countless precious stones. When the days of her agony are past, she will smile at Julian Green: "You don't have a drop of my blood," she will say, "but I love you as much as any of my sons. You have behaved much better than too many of them. When I was poor and defeated, you never threw mud and stones at me, you never fought over my wounded body, you wrote a book where you remembered me at the time when I was rich and beautiful. If I gave you as much as you say, you repaid me generously. I am not used to such gratitude. Here's Paris, *ma grande ville*, where I want you to live again, and where I hope, if my foolish children let me, I shall make you happy for the rest of your life." And she will hold out her arms to the little American boy of the rue de Passy who, since 1925, has offered her, simply, discreetly, but with a loving heart, a dozen black diamonds to enrich her priceless crown.

MAURICE EDGAR COINDREAU

Blood For A Stranger: RANDALL JARRELL. Harcourt, Brace.

The obvious thing about Jarrell, which must be disposed of at the beginning, is that he has borrowed a cup of sugar and an egg from Dylan Thomas, Auden, Tate, and a few others. Romantic criticism has taught us to believe that this is bad practice; that, to be worthy, a poem must be immaculately conceived. The spontaneous naïf was, and still is, the general conception of a poet. From this viewpoint, my criticism should end with the observation. But the paradox that Jarrell is often exciting and rare, confronts us with the choice of either the pre-script or the poems. This reviewer believes that any man who writes a good poem is being original.

To worry the question further, many of the poems in *Blood For A Stranger* first appeared in the New (at-any-cost) Directions' series of *Five Young American Poets*. Jarrell's carefully followed directions are new because his critical insight, which is sharp, has shown him the best modern roads; but they are old also in the sense that they extend a long way back to already proven traditions and methods. The post War I frenzy for the New, which has come to roost at last in Norfolk was, to say the least, a strange junction in his travels.

To get to the poems. They can be divided roughly into three categories: Before Auden, With Auden, After Auden. It is important to remember that all three occur simultaneously. The most outstanding poems are written in the last period, when Jarrell wears a mask that fits. Of these, *The Iceberg* and *The Head of Wisdom*, two cunningly maneuvered strategies of the imagination, are the best. In *The Head of Wisdom* the image of the Christ-child swaddles a 20th Century babe with its symbolic meaning, and contains the true line: "Hark how Herod's agents sing!" A conceit of our age, the "beetled" diver, and a well-wrought metaphysical plot, is the foundation for *The Iceberg*. There is a sestina-like poem, *The Refugees*, without any of the starch but with the sturdy architecture of which that form is capable. *On a Railway Platform, A Picture in the Paper*, and *An Essay on the Human Will* are also distinguished. At their

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best, these are characterized by a maturity of form and a careful, accurate diction. Mr. Jarrell knows how to fondle a poem until it smiles.

But I can't say as much for the lyrics written in Auden's night-club manner, like *Variations*, or for those covered by Dylan Thomas' foetal grease like *Che Faro Senza Euridice* with the line "my tears beat like blood in the rash breasts," or "You grinned like a dog in your anguish." The political poem *For the Madrid Road* indulges in shabby heroics and echoes Yeats' *Swift's Epitaph* to its own disadvantage. A lyric *When You and I Were All* in Auden's late manner, after a superb opening, comes to grief in the lines:

"... the scarecrow's stick
Creaked as spryly to our ears
As drumsticks to an orphan's jaw."

Too often a poem ends at a high pitch—"Its powerful and lifeless head," "The speechless cities of the night,"—are typical specimens. He might have used, of course, the dying fall, the sighing fall, the limp and held-in crying fall or the simply restrained ending, to advantage.

The word "stranger" fascinates many of these poems. It appears suddenly out of lyric or elegy or ballad. Mr. Jarrell studies "The Forms of the stranger," peers at "stranger's real and difficult face," takes "from strangers their unmeant kisses" and, at last, "sleeps in a stranger's arms while you died." For our purposes the poetic fact is more important than its psychic origins.

It is hard to evaluate Mr. Jarrell's place in contemporary poetry. One has the feeling from this first uneven book that despite the many flashes of real poetry and despite the few complete poems which ought to have a high place in the work of the young generation, that Randall Jarrell can do much more. The hard apprenticeship stage that has taught him his craft soundly is about over. He ought to open his own shop soon.

MILTON KLONSKY

About The Contributors

☆ JOHN BERRYMAN has been published in Laughlin's Younger Poets Series, (familiarily, *The Baby Bards*). He is associated with Harvard University. ☆ R. P. BLACKMUR is nearing completion of his books on Henry Adams and Henry James to be published by New Directions. ☆ JUNE CANNAN has appeared previously in *The Chimera*. She is a student at Barnard. ☆ MAURICE EDGAR COINDREAU has translated Erskine Caldwell, Das Passos, Steinbeck and Hemingway into French. He is a member of the Department of Modern Languages at Princeton. ☆ RICHARD EBERHART is a lieutenant in the Aviation Free Gunnery School, Hollywood, Fla. He has just published his third book of poetry, *Song and Idea*. He is one of the few poets that *Vice Versa* ever approved. ☆ KIMON FRIAR is a member of the Department of English of Adelphi College. He will shortly publish a book of criticism. ☆ BARBARA HOWES has contributed to *Partisan Review*. She lives in New York. ☆ MILTON KLONSKY has appeared in *The Chimera*. He expects to enter the army shortly. ☆ FREDERICK MORGAN is a graduate of Princeton University where he edited *The Nassau Lit*. ☆ KARL JAY SHAPIRO has just published *Person, Place and Thing*, his first book of poetry. He is at present in Australia with the armed forces. ☆ WALLACE STEVENS has published two books of poetry in the last year.